174. Reform of the Public Service.

MR. P. K. JOSEPH (*Member, Trading Classes, Kayankulam*) said that the superior officers of the Government did not realise the grievances of the people ; nor was there sufficient facility for appraising them of their grievances. The officers observed a distance and seldom moved with the masses. If any one proceeded to check the irregularities of an officer, he would be subjected to all manner of hardships not only from that officer, but from other officers as well. The Member who informed the authorities of the defalcation in the Kayankulam Municipality was harassed in many ways. He was prosecuted for putting up a sign-board on the street ; his bills were not paid. Again, as an instance of the trouble caused by officers, he mentioned the theft of a gold *aranjanam* and said that, for fear of being harassed by the authorities, information regarding it had to be suppressed. If a member of a municipal council should be placed in such a plight, he asked what the case of a man in the street would be !

The same attitude of the officers was the cause of corruption also. When one could not get a thing done by an officer to which he was entitled, necessarily it resulted in tipping. As giving bribe was an offence, the man who gave it was not bold enough to take steps or complain against an officer who took it. The Government should consider these matters sympathetically. With a view to remedy the state of affairs, appointments should be made with sole regard to purity and efficiency of the service to whichever community the person appointed might belong. It might be asked what was the standard by which these could be attained. The Member said he had only to say in reply that it depended on the attitude of mind of the supreme administrative head. The Government should encourage those who informed them of the irregularities of their officers ; they should also punish such of their officers severely.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Joseph, your subject is hardship caused to the people by the irregularities and corruption of public servants and suggestions to reform the public service. You have told us of the great gold *aranjanam*. May I charge it to you as the first duty of a responsible member of this Assembly, when, as you say, it is within your personal knowledge that a crime has been committed, to go and lay it before the Commissioner of Police. May I take it that you will go to him before you leave Trivandrum? To suppress such knowledge, and speak of the matter in general terms in the Assembly, is a failure of duty on the part of a loyal and dutiful citizen.

You also refer to certain other matters in your representation—the sign-boards, the monies, certain notices and changes. I leave it to your sense of duty to give me a written statement with full particulars of the names, witnesses etc., which will enable me to deal out justice to these men.

175. Public Service in relation to public weal.

MR. K. C. EAPEN (*Member, Trading Classes, Trivandrum*) said that it was with diffidence and hesitation that he spoke on the subject of 'public service in relation to public weal,' which title was advisedly given by him to draw attention to the grievances of the Jacobite Community to which he belonged. There were not many high officers in the State who belonged to that community. The only office to which a member of the community was appointed in recent years was the Principalship of the Law College—the appointment of Mr. E. J. John. Even that appointment which was praiseworthy in every way was the subject of attack by one of the Members of the House. Again, the unpleasant and ungracious way in which a reference was made by one of the Members to an act of humanity, if not of justice, done by the Government—the grant of a compassionate allowance to the widow and children of Mr. Philip, Inspector of Police—filled his heart with immense pain. He therefore protested against the statements made.

Admittedly, it was the right of every citizen to expect good government, efficient government, and no government had a right to exist which did not exist in the interests of the governed. So long as appointments loomed large in the eye of the people, whatever the cause might be, there was bound to be friction. The officers of Government should learn to serve the State and be of help to the poor citizen on whose patience rested every civilized society and government. It would be a good thing if the officers took a vow that they would help and guide the poor

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villager. If this was not possible, at least they should abstain from doing harm. There were two classes of officers, one who started ideals, but failed when there was self-interest at stake, and the other a money-making class. Whether it was the first or the second, the common villager's lot did not improve a whit. There were again two classes of departments. One class of department, if not properly controlled, made the lot of the people unendurable, *e. g.*, the Police. At the risk of being accused of a lack of patriotism in him, he would say that the department should be, in the interests of the people, in the hands of an able foreigner. The other class of departments could do good and guide the people to happiness, *e. g.*, the Agricultural Department and the Co-operative Department. In spite of the best efforts of the Director of Agriculture, a very popular and endearing officer, the department had not produced the expected results. A great deal more was expected of the Co-operative Department. The indifference or lack of astuteness on the part of the Department of Industries was not pardonable in view of the expectation it had raised. When Mr. A. Gopala Menon was sent to England, it was definitely said that he would be trained in banking and industries. The idea never materialised.

Much social service had to be done by the officers. More of intimate relationship and mutual understanding were necessary between the officers of the Government. Much of communal hatred was due to the officers themselves who in the name of the community to which they belonged used to advocate their advancement in the service through the columns of some newspapers. The unsuspecting public would feel that, if the Government did not accept the suggestion, it would result in a catastrophy. The officers should be prepared to sacrifice their personal interests to the country's cause. An Officers' Association, if properly conducted, would be conducive to greater contact between the officers and would also be productive of much good.

The problem of public service was a very serious one ; it was a problem of problems and all the problems of the day arose out of that one problem. There was misunderstanding between one officer and another, between the Government and the public. Therefore, too much attention cannot be bestowed on creating a better understanding.

As regards the problem of unemployment, the Member thought that a great deal could be done by giving the right kind of education in the schools. The right kind of education needed was that which secured the orderly progress of the country, an education which did not discard religion, an education which fostered the spirit of citizenship, which inculcated in the pupils the duties of a citizen and which taught them how much they did not know and how much they had yet to learn.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Eapen, I am afraid you wandered rather far from the set subject recorded as what you were going to speak about. Nevertheless, much that you have said was instructive and, I believe, perfectly true. I know that the matter you touched upon just now, which so far as I know has not been touched upon by any other public speaker whom I have heard during the last eight months, is the necessity for a closer and more friendly contact between the people and the officials. Every officer, whatever his status, however high placed he may be, is a link between that abstract entity, the Government, and the soul of the people. Therefore, it is the bounden duty of every officer to mingle freely with the people. The idea that aloofness imparts dignity is entirely a mistaken one and the idea that friendship means familiarity is equally wrong. I hope every one of you, as Members, will see that a kindlier and friendlier relationship is established between officialdom and the public.

Another matter you touched upon was the interference of Government officials in these communal and political differences in the country. As you observed, there are certain officers who go about the country taking an active part in these movements. Let me tell you, Mr. Eapen, that I am aware of that fact. But there are always black sheep in every fold. There are treacherous, low-minded, unprincipled people even in the ranks of Government servants. But such men, who go about the country stirring up strife and keeping themselves well in the back-ground, are difficult to catch with definite charges. They have studied the situation and they carefully act upon the principle that what is basely done must be done safely too.

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